

Remarks

After the foregoing amendment, claims 1 – 14 and 16 – 21 are pending, with claims 1, 7, 11, 16, and 21 being the independent claims. Claim 15 has been cancelled and all other pending claims have been amended. New claim 21 has been added.

Applicants would like to thank the examiner for the interview conducted with Applicants' attorney on October 6. Pursuant to the discussion during the interview, which centered on the scope of the independent claims in view of the teachings of the prior art, Applicants have amended the claims to more specifically claim what Applicants consider to be the invention. Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the amended claims.

Claims 1 - 20

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly claim the concept of compiling a report that identifies the relative frequency of help requests for each discrete context of the underlying application that has the associated help system. Additionally, the prior identifier element has been eliminated. Carrying forward the concept of the identifier a more specific combination of elements. First, a limitation has been added that the website (which is the underlying application) has a plurality of discrete contexts.

Second, an identifying step has been added that requires that the particular discrete context of the underlying website at the time the request for electronic help was made be identified. A new step has also been added to clarify this concept. That step is the step of storing the context in a data storage area. Thus, in combination, these elements require that the specific context of the underlying application be identified when a request for electronic help is made. This specific context is stored in a data storage area and associated with a request for electronic help. Although not required by the claim, multiple iterations of these steps would create in the data storage area a list of the discrete contexts of the underlying application and the number of times a electronic help was requested in association with each of the discrete contexts.

Finally, the reporting concept has also been amended to more specifically claim the concept of compiling a plurality of stored contexts into a report. The required limitation of the report is that the report identifies the frequency of help requests for at least two discrete contexts of the underlying application. This information is extremely helpful to the application developer or website manager

because it facilitates the identification of trouble spots in the application or website. Such a report advantageously provides the application developer or website manager with metrics generated from real users that identify where those users need help to proceed with the underlying application. This information allows the application developer or website manager to go back and evaluate the underlying application and make changes to it in order to increase the application's usability and intuitiveness.

The concept of improving the underlying application or website based on the report is embodied in claims 2 and 17, which requires the additional step of modifying the discrete context of the underlying website with the highest frequency of help requests. Applicants assert that the prior art does not fairly teach or disclose a system or method for associating a request for electronic help with a particular discrete context of the underlying application and storing that information such that a report can be compiled that shows the relative frequency of help requests for the discrete contexts of the underlying application. Applicants therefore respectfully request allowance of the amended claims.

New Claim 21

New independent claim 21 is presented to claim a specific embodiment of Applicants' invention. In particular, the claimed method is for improving a software application that is designed to complete a transaction. To complete the transaction, the software application has a series of data entry fields. The software application also has an associated electronic help system. The claimed method requires that when a request for electronic help is received, the current data entry field (at the time the request for electronic help was made) is identified. Next, a count of electronic help requests for the specifically identified data entry field is incremented. Although not required by the claim, over time, through multiple iterations of the steps in the claim, each data entry field in the series of data entry fields will have a certain count. The claimed method additionally requires compiling a report that provides this count for each data entry field in the series of data entry fields. The report advantageously identifies the data entry field that generated the most requests for electronic help, which in turn facilitates improvement of the software application.

Toader and Eisen References

The prior art of record does not teach the claimed invention. Toader does not teach or disclose the steps of receiving a request for electronic help and upon receipt, identifying the discrete context of the underlying application where help was requested. Toader also does not teach storing the context in a data storage area and compiling a report that identifies the frequency of help requests for at least two of the contexts.

The Eisen reference, however, teaches the use of a variable for tracking which functional component the user is executing in the underlying application. (Col. 7, Lines 48 – 50). Eisen further teaches that each time help information is requested for a particular functional component, the application increments the help/dialog access information for the functional component. (Col. 7, Lines 52 – 55).

At this point, however, Eisen diverges from the claimed invention. Specifically, Eisen additionally teaches that a user specified threshold is checked to see if the user has surpassed the threshold. If the corresponding threshold has been attained, the skill level of the user is decreased and thus additional help information is provided. If the skill level of the user is decreased, Eisen expressly teaches that the number of help accesses for the functional component is reset to zero. (Col. 7, Lines 57 – 62). Thus, Eisen does not teach the tracking of the aggregate number of help requests for a functional component, as required by the claimed invention.

Importantly, Eisen discloses the purpose for tracking the number of help requests for each functional component. This purpose is to track the user's progression in the application so that as the user becomes familiar with the help information at one skill level, a condensed version of the help information can then be provided. (Col. 7, Lines 62 – 67). Moreover, because Eisen expressly teaches that the number of access is reset to zero when the skill level of the user is changed, Eisen also does not teach compiling a report showing the aggregate number of help requests for the various functional components of the application, as required by the claimed invention. The addition of Toader does not cure the defects of Eisen. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully assert that the amended claims are in condition for allowance and a notice of allowance is earnestly requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing Amendments and Remarks, Applicants respectfully assert that all claims are presently in condition for allowance and such action is earnestly requested. If the Examiner has any questions or comments regarding the above Amendments and Remarks, the Examiner is respectfully urged to contact the undersigned at the number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,
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